Decontrol of Coffee

*559. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken by Government recently to decontrol coffee as a measure to stabilise the prices and give good returns to industry;

(b) if so, whether the Export Committee, set up by Government under the Chairmanship of Commerce Secretary has submitted its report;

(c) if so, what are the main recommendations of this Committee and how the problems of coffee scarcity faced by the consumers and its soaring prices are proposed to be solved; and

(d) when and what is the amendment proposed to be brought in he Coffee Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) In order to further liberalise the coffee marketing system Govt. have recently allowed 100% Free Sale Quota (FSQ) to the small growers having heloding size less than 10 ha. and 70% FSQ to other registered growers.

(b) and (c) To consider issues relating to Coffee Industry as they arise from time to time, Govt. had constituted a Core Committee on coffee on 30th January, 1995 under the chairmanship of Commerce Secretary with representatives of growers, traders and exporters of coffee as members. This Committee has been formed with a view to have closer interaction with Industry on contemporary issues on a continuing basis. The Committee is not meant to submit any formal report.

(d) The Coffee Act is presently under review in the context of the recently liberalised coffee marketing system and the need for making amendments, if any, therein will be considered on merits.

Fire accident in Neyveli Lignite Corporation

*560. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state: (a) whether there was any fire accident in Neyveli Lignite Corporation in January, 1995; and

(b) if so, what were the reasons and what was the estimated loss to property?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) There were two fire accidents in Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited during January, 1995. The first one occurred on 04.01.95 due to partial burning of Conveyor Belt No.1 & 2 in the Second Mine of NLC Limited. The Second fire accident took place on 30th January, 1995, in the Carbonization Unit of the Briquetting & Cabonization Plant of NLC Limited.

On 04.01.95, when the maintenance works in the Bucket Wheel Excavator No.1421, deployed in the surface banch system of the Second Mine, was in progress, molten metal pieces, hot pieces of bolt and sparks fell on the Conveyor Belt No.2, igniting the rubber belt in conveyor No. 1. & 2. The estimated material loss due to this accident has been assessed at Rs.24 lakhs.

On 30.01.95, when repair works were being carried out in the Carbonization plant, the contract workers, on their own, decided to cut a frozen pin by gas cutter. While cutting a spark blow out and had fallen on the acetylene hose, leading to the leakage of acetylene gas and consequential fire. Only a gas cylinder was damged in the accident, but there was no loss to the property. However, five contractor's workmen sustained injuries and despite best medical attention provided, four of them had succumbed to their injuries.